

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
U.S. EMBASSY, Yerevan
Notice of Funding Opportunity**

Funding Opportunity Title: Democracy Commission Small Grants Program Competition

Funding Opportunity Number: DemCom-FY23-ARM1

Deadline for Applications: 11:59 PM local (Armenia) time on April 16, 2023

Assistance Listing Number: 19.900

Total Amount Available: Approximately \$500,000 pending the availability of funds

A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The *U.S. Embassy Yerevan / Public Diplomacy Section* of the U.S. Department of State announces an open competition for organizations to submit applications to carry out a program to develop democratic institutions, promote respect for human rights, and support civic education and civil society capacity building in Armenia. Please follow all instructions below.

Program Objectives:

The United States Embassy is pleased to announce the Democracy Commission Small Grants Program competition for FY 2023. The program supports initiatives that develop democratic institutions and support civil society capacity building in Armenia. Grants may support initiatives within the following thematic areas: Promotion of civil society and association building; Free flow of information (including support for independent media); Transparency in government; Rule of law and legal reform; Public education and advocacy (including civic education); Democratic political processes; Conflict resolution; Protection of human rights and promotion of tolerance; Anti-trafficking and anti-corruption; Ethnic minority, LGBTQ+, and gender equality; and Women's empowerment. However, the priority program objectives for 2023 are:

- Protection of human rights and promotion of tolerance;
- Conflict resolution; and
- Advancing equity and inclusion of ethnic minorities and LGBTQ+ populations, gender equality; and Women's empowerment.

All projects should explain how the proposed activities impact Armenia's democratic development and further the long-term goals of the organization. Project proposals should describe specific objectives and expected outcomes. Proposals focused primarily on training or capacity building will not be considered unless the training will lead to concrete, measurable outcomes. Collaborative projects between partnering NGOs are strongly encouraged.

Participants and Audiences:

Proposals that engage youth as a key audience will be given priority. Please be specific when mentioning the target audience(s) of your proposed project, including demographic information and the approximate number of beneficiaries to be directly and indirectly impacted by project activities.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

Length of performance period: *3 to 12 months*

Number of awards anticipated: *up to 15 awards* (dependent on amounts)

Award amounts: awards may range from a minimum of *\$5,000* to a maximum of *\$50,000*. The Commission may award grants of up to \$50,000. Exceptions to the limit may be authorized on a case-by-case basis.

Total available funding: *\$500,000*

Type of Funding: *FY22/23 Assistance Europe Eurasia Central Asia under the Foreign Assistance Act*

Anticipated program start date: *October 1, 2023*

This notice is subject to availability of funding.

Funding Instrument Type: The type of funding instrument, exact amount of funding, the scope of work, and the terms and conditions of a successful award will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and US Embassy representatives after the application has been selected for funding. The funding instrument will be either a grant or a cooperative agreement. The award will be a cooperative agreement if the proposed project involves substantial US Embassy involvement. "Substantial involvement" means that, after the award is approved for funding, US Embassy will assist, guide, coordinate, or participate in project activities in a partnership role. US Embassy will NOT assume direction, primary responsibility, or a dominant role in project activities. These reside with the recipient for the project as a whole.

Examples of substantial involvement can include, but are not limited to:

- Active collaboration with the recipient in the implementation of the award;
- Joint preparation or presentation of results with the recipient;
- Involvement in the selection of program participants.

Program Performance Period: Proposed programs should be completed in *12 months* or less.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

The following organizations are eligible to apply:

- Armenian not-for-profit organizations, including think tanks and civil society/non-governmental organizations;
- Independent media outlets registered in Armenia.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching: *Cost sharing is encouraged but not required. Matching is not required.*

3. Other Eligibility Requirements

In order to be eligible to receive an award, all organizations must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number issued via www.SAM.gov as well as a valid registration on www.SAM.gov. Please see Section D.7 for more information. Individuals are not required to have a UEI or be registered in SAM.gov.

Applications received after the deadline of 11:59 PM local (Armenia) time on April 16, 2023, will not be reviewed. Applications lacking any of the required elements, or which do not follow the instructions listed in this funding announcement, will be deemed ineligible.

Applicants are only allowed to submit one proposal per organization. If more than one proposal is submitted from an organization, all proposals from that institution will be considered ineligible for funding.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Address to Request Application Package

All applications must be written in English and submitted by April 16, 2023, 23:59 local [Armenia] time, via email to yerevangrants@state.gov or alternatively you may use the application portal available at the following link:

<https://www.usa.am/forms/site/view?id=86f4293849f2>

Applicants can find application forms and other materials needed to apply on GRANTS.gov: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html> and U.S. Embassy Yerevan's website (<https://am.usembassy.gov/embassy/jobs/>) under the "Democracy Commission Small Grant program" program (funding opportunity number - DemCom-FY23-ARM1). Please contact U.S. Embassy Yerevan point of contact listed in Section G if requesting reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities or for

security reasons. Please note that reasonable accommodations do not include deadline extensions.

Application forms required below are available at: *Embassy website, grants.gov, SAMS Domestic, etc.*

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

Please follow all instructions below carefully. Proposals that do not meet the requirements of this announcement or fail to comply with the stated requirements will be ineligible.

Content of Application

Please ensure:

- The proposal clearly addresses the goals and objectives of this funding opportunity
- All documents are in English
- All budgets are in U.S. dollars
- All pages are numbered
- All documents are formatted to 8 ½ x 11 paper, and
- All Microsoft Word documents are single-spaced, 12 point Calibri font, with a minimum of 1-inch margins.

The following documents are required:

1. Mandatory application forms

- **SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance – organizations)** at am.usembassy.gov and [Grants.gov](https://grants.gov) website
- **SF-424A (Budget Information for Non-Construction programs)** at am.usembassy.gov and [Grants.gov](https://grants.gov) website
- **SF-424B (Assurances for Non-Construction programs)** at am.usembassy.gov and [Grants.gov](https://grants.gov) website (*note: the SF-424B is only required for individuals and for organizations not registered in SAM.gov*)

2. Summary Page: Cover sheet stating the applicant name and organization, proposal date, program title, program period proposed start and end date, and brief purpose of the program (up to 1,000 characters, spaces included).

3. Proposal: The proposal should contain sufficient information that anyone not familiar with it would understand exactly what the applicant wants to do. You may use your own proposal format, but it must include all the items below.

- **Introduction to the Organization or Individual applying:** A description of past and present operations, showing ability to carry out the program, including information on all previous grants from the U.S. Embassy and/or U.S. government agencies (up to 500 characters).
- **Problem Statement:** Clear, concise and well-supported statement of the problem to be addressed and why the proposed program is needed (up to 2,000 characters).

- **Program Goals and Objectives:** The “goals” describe what the program is intended to achieve. The “objectives” refer to the intermediate accomplishments on the way to the goals. These should be achievable and measurable (up to 4,000 characters).
- **Program Activities:** Describe the program activities and how they will help achieve the objectives (up to 4,000 characters).
- **Program Methods and Design:** A description of how the program is expected to work to solve the stated problem and achieve the goal. Include a logic model as appropriate (up to 4,000 characters).
- **Proposed Program Schedule and Timeline:** The proposed timeline for the program activities. Include the dates, times, and locations of planned activities and events (up to 4,000 characters).
- **Key Personnel:** Names, titles, roles and experience/qualifications of key personnel involved in the program. What proportion of their time will be used in support of this program (up to 1,000 characters)?
- **Program Partners:** List the names and type of involvement of key partner organizations and sub-awardees (up to 1,000 characters).
- **Program Monitoring and Evaluation Plan:** This is an important part of successful grants. Throughout the time-frame of the grant, how will the activities be monitored to ensure they are happening in a timely manner, and how will the program be evaluated to make sure it is meeting the goals of the grant (up to 4,000 characters).
Recommended Program Monitoring and Evaluation: The applications should include a plan to monitor the project’s success. The applications must include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus a description of the methodology used to link outcomes to original project objectives. Ideally the recipient organization will track participants or partners and be able to respond to key evaluation questions, including satisfaction with the program, learning as a result of the program, changes in behavior as a result of the program, and effects of the program on institutions (institutions in which participants work or partner institutions).

The Recipient must develop qualitative and quantitative indicators, including appropriate Standard Foreign Assistance Indicators (F indicators), to measure the achievement of the program objectives and expected results. Relevant mandatory F indicators include:

- Number of People who Have Completed USG Assisted Civic Education Programs
- Number of youth trained in soft skills/life skills through USG assisted programs
- Number of USG-assisted media-sector civil society organizations (CSO) and/or institutions that serve to strengthen the independent media or journalists

The monitoring plan should include indicators that measure gains towards the policy sub-objective or goal. Potential illustrative custom indicators include:

- Number of follow-up community-oriented activities implemented by project beneficiaries.
 - Number of youths directly reached and empowered with new civic skills.
 - Percentage increase in the civic/soft skills of program beneficiaries as evidenced by a baseline and final evaluation assessments.
- **Future Funding or Sustainability** Applicant's plan for continuing the program beyond the grant period, or the availability of other resources, if applicable (up to 1,500 characters).
4. **Detailed Budget** (must be an Excel workbook) that includes three (3) columns containing the request to U.S. Embassy Yerevan for U.S. share of cost, any cost sharing contribution, and the total budget. A Summary Budget should also be included using the OMB-approved budget categories (see SF-424A as a sample) in a separate tab. Costs must be in U.S. Dollars. Detailed line-item budgets for sub-grantees should be included as additional tabs within the Excel workbook (if available at the time of submission). For more information, *Budget Guidance and Template for New Awards* is provided as an attachment to this NOFO. Use of the Detailed Budget template (*Budget Guidance and Template for New Awards*) is not required, however, the submitted budget must follow OMB budget categories. If an applicant's budget does not follow OMB budget categories, the application will be deemed technically ineligible and will not be considered for funding.
5. **Budget Justification Narrative:** After filling out the SF-424A Budget (above), use a separate file to describe each of the budget expenses in detail. See section *H. Other Information: Guidelines for Budget Submissions* below for further information.
6. **Attachments (the total size of all attachments should not exceed 50MB):**
- 1-page CV or resume of key personnel who are proposed for the program
 - Letters of support from program partners describing the roles and responsibilities of each partner
 - If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, your latest NICRA should be included as a PDF file.
 - Official permission letters, if required for program activities
7. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov)

Required Registrations:

All organizations, whether based in the United States or in another country, must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and an active registration with the SAM.gov. A UEI is one of the data elements mandated by Public Law 109-282, the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), for all Federal awards.

Note: As of April 2022, a DUNS number is no longer required for federal assistance applications.

The 2 CFR 200 requires that sub-grantees obtain a UEI number. Please note the UEI for sub-grantees is not required at the time of application but will be required before an award is processed and/or directed to a sub-grantee.

Note: The process of obtaining or renewing a SAM.gov registration may take anywhere from 4-8 weeks. Please begin your registration as early as possible.

- Organizations **based in the United States** or that pay employees within the United States will need an Employer Identification Number (EIN) from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and a UEI number prior to registering in SAM.gov.
- Organizations **based outside of the United States** and that do not pay employees within the United States do not need an EIN from the IRS but do need a UEI number prior to registering in SAM.gov.
- **Please note that as of November 2022 and February 2022 respectively, organizations based outside of the United States that do not intend to apply for U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) awards are no longer required to have a NATO Commercial and Government Entity (NCAGE) code or CAGE code to apply for non-DoD foreign assistance funding opportunities.** If an applicant organization is mid-registration and wishes to remove a CAGE or NCAGE code from their SAM.gov registration, the applicant should submit a help desk ticket ("incident") with the Federal Service Desk (FSD) online at www.fsd.gov using the following language: "I do not intend to seek financial assistance from the Department of Defense. I do not wish to obtain a CAGE or NCAGE code. I understand that I will need to submit my registration after this incident is resolved in order to have my registration activated."

Organizations based outside of the United States and that DO NOT plan to do business with the DoD should follow the below instructions:

Step 1: Proceed to SAM.gov to obtain a UEI and complete the SAM.gov registration process. SAM.gov registration must be renewed annually.

Organizations based outside of the United States and that DO plan to do business with the DoD in addition to Department of State should follow the below instructions:

Step 1: Apply for an NCAGE code by following the instructions on the NSPA NATO website linked below:

NCAGE Homepage:

<https://eportal.nspa.nato.int/AC135Public/sc/CageList.aspx>

NCAGE Code Request Tool (NCRT):

Exemptions

An exemption from the UEI and sam.gov registration requirements may be permitted on a case-by-case basis if:

- An applicant's identity must be protected due to potential endangerment of their mission, their organization's status, their employees, or individuals being served by the applicant.
- For an applicant, if the Federal awarding agency makes a determination that there are exigent circumstances that prohibit the applicant from receiving a unique entity identifier and completing SAM registration prior to receiving a Federal award. In these instances, Federal awarding agencies must require the recipient to obtain a unique entity identifier and complete SAM registration within 30 days of the Federal award date.

Organizations requesting exemption from UEI or SAM.gov requirements must email the point of contact listed in the NOFO at least two weeks prior to the deadline in the NOFO providing a justification of their request. **Approval for a SAM.gov exemption must come from the warranted Grants Officer before the application can be deemed eligible for review.**

8. Submission Dates and Times

Applications are due no later than **11:59 PM local (Armenia) time on April 16, 2023**. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

9. Funding Restrictions

The funds requested under this program CANNOT fund: partisan political activity; humanitarian aid and charities or charitable activities; scientific research; fundraising campaigns; commercial projects; trade activities; conferences and individual trips abroad;

projects aimed primarily at the institutional development of the organization. Please note that award funds cannot be used to purchase alcoholic beverages.

10. Other Submission Requirements

Applications and application materials must be submitted using the application portal set up for this round of competition. Please see Section D.1 for the link.

Please visit the U.S. Embassy Yerevan website for more specific information about the grant NOFO: <https://www.usa.am/cms/announcements.php>

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Criteria

Each application will be evaluated and rated on the basis of the evaluation criteria outlined below.

Quality and Feasibility of the Program Idea – 25 points: The program idea is well developed, with detail about how program activities will be carried out. The proposal includes a reasonable implementation timeline.

Organizational Capacity and Record on Previous Grants – 15 points: The organization has expertise in its stated field and has the internal controls in place to manage federal funds. This includes a financial management system and a bank account.

Program Planning/Ability to Achieve Objectives – 20 points: Goals and objectives are clearly stated and program approach is likely to provide maximum impact in achieving the proposed results.

Budget – 10 points: The budget justification is detailed. Costs are reasonable in relation to the proposed activities and anticipated results. The budget is realistic, accounting for all necessary expenses to achieve proposed activities.

Monitoring and evaluation plan – 10 points: Applicant demonstrates it is able to measure program success against key indicators and provides milestones to indicate progress toward goals outlined in the proposal. The program includes output and outcome indicators, and shows how and when those will be measured.

Expected Results and Sustainability – 20 points: Program activities will continue to have positive impact after the end of the program.

The maximum score for each criterion is indicated in parentheses. Each criterion includes factors reviewers will consider to determine how well an application meets that criterion. Reviewers must provide comments to justify the scores they provide for each criterion. Applications that best address these criteria will be the most competitive.

2. Review and Selection Process

The Department of State is committed to ensuring a competitive and standardized process for awarding funding. Applications will be screened initially in a Technical Eligibility Review stage to determine whether applicants meet the eligibility requirements and have submitted all required documents outlined. Applications that do not meet these requirements will not advance beyond the Technical Eligibility Review stage and will be deemed ineligible for funding under this NOFO.

All applications that are deemed eligible will proceed to the Merit Review Panel consisting of U.S. Government subject matter and/or country-specific experts and will be rated on a numeric scale. U.S. Embassy Yerevan reserves the right to request the assistance of non-U.S. Government Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), if appropriate to the solicitation. Point values for individual elements of the application are presented Section E. Merit Review Panel Reviewers' ratings, and any resulting recommendations, are advisory. Merit Review Panel Reviewers may provide conditions and recommendations on applications to enhance the proposed project, which must be addressed by the applicant before further consideration of the award.

The Merit Review Panel's recommendations may be subject to a final review and high-level approval at the discretion of the U.S. Embassy Yerevan's senior level official and will be influenced by whether the application meets the Department of State's programmatic goals and objectives, how it supports the Department's overarching foreign policy priorities, and the geographic distribution of the top-ranking applications. The decision for the final award determination rests with the Grants Officer.

3. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates *August 1, 2023*

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Federal Award Notices

The grant award or cooperative agreement will be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. The assistance award agreement is the authorizing document and it will be provided to the recipient for review and signature by email. The recipient may only start incurring program expenses beginning on the start date shown on the grant award document signed by the Grants Officer.

If a proposal is selected for funding, the Department of State has no obligation to provide any additional future funding. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the discretion of the Department of State.

Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the U.S. government, nor does it commit the U.S. government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Further, the U.S. government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received.

Payment Method: The payments under this NOFO will be done through completing SF-270—Request for Advance or Reimbursement and submitting the form to the Grants Officer. Payment frequency and amounts of the approved applications will be determined during the negotiation phase of the project and documented in the award file.

Advance/reimbursement payments must be limited to the minimum amounts needed and be timed to be in accordance with the actual, immediate cash requirements of the Recipient in carrying out the purpose of this award. The timing and amount of advance/reimbursed payments must be as close as is administratively feasible to the actual disbursements by the Recipient for direct program or project costs and the proportionate share of any allowable indirect costs.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Before submitting an application, applicants should review all the terms and conditions and required certifications which will apply to this award, to ensure that they will be able to comply.

These include:

- 2 CFR 25 - UNIVERSAL IDENTIFIER AND SYSTEM FOR AWARD MANAGEMENT
- 2 CFR 170 - REPORTING SUBAWARD AND EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION INFORMATION
- 2 CFR 175 - AWARD TERM FOR TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS
- 2 CFR 182 - GOVERNMENTWIDE REQUIREMENTS FOR DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE (FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE)
- 2 CFR 183 - NEVER CONTRACT WITH THE ENEMY
- 2 CFR 600 – DEPARTMENT OF STATE REQUIREMENTS

- U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE STANDARD TERMS AND CONDITIONS

In accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's guidance located at 2 CFR part 200, all applicable Federal laws, and relevant Executive guidance, the Department of State will review and consider applications for funding, as applicable to specific programs, pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity in accordance with the following: NOTE:

- Guidance for Grants and Agreements in Title 2 of the Code of Federal Regulations (2 CFR), as updated in the Federal Register's 85 FR 49506 on August 13, 2020, particularly on:
 - Selecting recipients most likely to be successful in delivering results based on the program objectives through an objective process of evaluating Federal award applications (2 CFR part 200.205),
 - Prohibiting the purchase of certain telecommunication and video surveillance services or equipment in alignment with section 889 of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2019 (Pub. L. No. 115—232) (2 CFR part 200.216),
 - Promoting the freedom of speech and religious liberty in alignment with *Promoting Free Speech and Religious Liberty* (E.O. 13798) and *Improving Free Inquiry, Transparency, and Accountability at Colleges and Universities* (E.O. 13864) (§§ 200.300, 200.303, 200.339, and 200.341),
 - Providing a preference, to the extent permitted by law, to maximize use of goods, products, and materials produced in the United States (2 CFR part 200.322), and
 - Terminating agreements in whole or in part to the greatest extent authorized by law, if an award no longer effectuates the program goals or agency priorities (2 CFR part 200.340).

3. Reporting

Reporting Requirements: Recipients will be required to submit financial reports and program reports. The award document will specify how often these reports must be submitted. All recipients must submit a formal report to the Grants Officer upon completion of the project. The report should discuss what was done, whether the project was successful from the applicant's perspective and how it might be improved in the future. Copies of video materials, CDs and other video and audio aids generated during the implementation of the project attesting to the success of the grant activities are welcome, and sometimes required indeed. An accounting of the use of the grant funds must also be included. The information from this report will enable the Democracy Commission to better evaluate future proposals. The regular program reports also need to provide sections analyzing their monitoring findings.

Foreign Assistance Data Review: As required by Congress, the Department of State must make progress in its efforts to improve tracking and reporting of foreign assistance data

through the Foreign Assistance Data Review (FADR). The FADR requires tracking of foreign assistance activity data from budgeting, planning, and allocation through obligation and disbursement. Successful applicants will be required to report and draw down federal funding based on the appropriate FADR Data Elements, indicated within their award documentation. In cases of more than one FADR Data Element, typically program or sector and/or regions or country, the successful applicant will be required to maintain separate accounting records.

G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACTS

If you have any questions about the grant application process, please contact: yerevangrants@state.gov.

Except for technical submission questions, during the NOFO period U.S. Department of State staff shall not discuss this competition with applicants until the entire proposal review process has been completed and rejection and approval letters have been transmitted.

H. OTHER INFORMATION

Guidelines for Budget Justification

Personnel and Fringe Benefits: Describe the wages, salaries, and benefits of temporary or permanent staff who will be working directly for the applicant on the program, and the percentage of their time that will be spent on the program.

Travel: Estimate the costs of travel and per diem for this program, for program staff, consultants or speakers, and participants/beneficiaries. If the program involves international travel, include a brief statement of justification for that travel.

Equipment: Describe any machinery, furniture, or other personal property that is required for the program, which has a useful life of more than one year (or a life longer than the duration of the program), and costs at least \$5,000 per unit.

Supplies: List and describe all the items and materials, including any computer devices, that are needed for the program. If an item costs more than \$5,000 per unit, then put it in the budget under Equipment.

Contractual: Describe goods and services that the applicant plans to acquire through a contract with a vendor. Also describe any sub-awards to non-profit partners that will help carry out the program activities.

Other Direct Costs: Describe other costs directly associated with the program, which do not fit in the other categories. For example, shipping costs for materials and equipment or applicable taxes. All “Other” or “Miscellaneous” expenses must be itemized and explained.

Indirect Costs: These are costs that cannot be linked directly to the program activities, such as overhead costs needed to help keep the organization operating. If your organization has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (NICRA) and includes NICRA charges in the budget, attach a copy of your latest NICRA. Organizations that have never had a NICRA may request indirect costs of 10% of modified total direct costs as defined in 2 CFR 200.68.

“Cost Sharing” refers to contributions from the organization or other entities other than the U.S. Embassy. It also includes in-kind contributions such as volunteers’ time and donated venues.

Alcoholic Beverages: Please note that award funds cannot be used for alcoholic beverages.